

RCF occupational, health and safety guidelines

Occupational health and safety (OHS), including compliance with the OHS requirements pursuant to national laws and regulations, are the responsibility and duty of the employer. The employer should show strong leadership and commitment to OHS activities in the *organization*, and make appropriate arrangements for the establishment of an OHS management system. The system should contain the main elements of policy, organizing, planning and implementation, evaluation and action for improvement.

1. Occupational health and safety policy

1.1. The employer, in consultation with workers and their representatives, should set out in writing an OHS policy, which should be:

- (a) specific to the *organization* and appropriate to its size and the nature of its activities;
- (b) concise, clearly written, dated and made effective by the signature or endorsement of the employer or the most senior accountable person in the *organization*;
- (c) communicated and readily accessible to all persons at their place of work;
- (d) reviewed for continuing suitability; and
- (e) made available to relevant external interested parties, as appropriate.

1.2. The OHS policy should include, as a minimum, the following key principles and objectives to which the *organization* is committed:

- (a) protecting the safety and health of all members of the *organization* by preventing work-related injuries, ill health, diseases and incidents;
- (b) complying with relevant OHS national laws and regulations, voluntary programmes, collective agreements on OHS and other requirements to which the *organization* subscribes;
- (c) ensuring that workers and their representatives are consulted and encouraged to participate actively in all elements of the OHS management system; and
- (d) continually improving the performance of the OHS management system.

1.3. The OHS management system should be compatible with or integrated in other management systems in the *organization*.

2. Worker participation

2.1. Worker participation is an essential element of the OHS management system in the *organization*.

2.2. The employer should ensure that workers and their safety and health representatives are consulted, informed and trained on all aspects of OHS, including emergency arrangements, associated with their work.

2.3. The employer should make arrangements for workers and their safety and health representatives to have the time and resources to participate actively in the processes of organizing, planning and implementation, evaluation and action for improvement of the OHS management system.

2.4. The employer should ensure, as appropriate, the establishment and efficient functioning of a safety and health committee and the recognition of workers' safety and health representatives, in accordance with national laws and practice.

3. Responsibility and accountability

3.1. The employer should have overall responsibility for the protection of workers' safety and health, and provide leadership for OHS activities in the *organization*.

3.2. The employer and senior management should allocate responsibility, accountability and authority for the development, implementation and performance of the OHS management system and the achievement of the relevant OHS objectives. Structures and processes should be established which:

- (a) ensure that OHS is a line-management responsibility which is known and accepted at all levels;
- (b) define and communicate to the members of the *organization* the responsibility, accountability and authority of persons who identify, evaluate or control OHS hazards and risks;
- (c) provide effective supervision, as necessary, to ensure the protection of workers' safety and health;
- (d) promote cooperation and communication among members of the *organization*, including workers and their representatives, to implement the elements of the *organization's* OHS management system;
- (e) fulfil the principles of OHS management systems contained in relevant national guidelines, tailored guidelines or voluntary programmes, as appropriate, to which the *organization* subscribes;
- (f) establish and implement a clear OHS policy and measurable objectives;
- (g) establish effective arrangements to identify and eliminate or control work-related hazards and risks, and promote health at work;
- (h) establish prevention and health promotion programmes;
- (i) ensure effective arrangements for the full participation of workers and their representatives in the fulfilment of the OHS policy;
- (j) provide appropriate resources to ensure that persons responsible for OHS, including the safety and health committee, can perform their functions properly; and
- (k) ensure effective arrangements for the full participation of workers and their representatives in safety and health committees, where they exist.

3.3. A person or persons at the senior management level should be appointed, where appropriate, with responsibility, accountability and authority for:

- (a) the development, implementation, periodic review and evaluation of the OHS management system;

- (b) periodic reporting to the senior management on the performance of the OHS management system; and
- (c) promoting the participation of all members of the *organization*.

4. Competence¹ and training

4.1. The necessary OHS competence requirements should be defined by the employer, and arrangements established and maintained to ensure that all persons are competent to carry out the safety and health aspects of their duties and responsibilities.

4.2. The employer should have, or should have access to, sufficient OHS competence to identify and eliminate or control work-related hazards and risks, and to implement the OHS management system.

4.3. Under the arrangements referred to in paragraph 4.1, training programmes should:

- (a) cover all members of the *organization*, as appropriate;
- (b) be conducted by competent persons;
- (c) provide effective and timely initial and refresher training at appropriate intervals;
- (d) include participants' evaluation of their comprehension and retention of the training;
- (e) be reviewed periodically. The review should include the safety and health committee, where it exists, and the training programmes, modified as necessary to ensure their relevance and effectiveness; and
- (f) be documented, as appropriate and according to the size and nature of activity of the *organization*.

4.4. Training should be provided to all participants at no cost and should take place during working hours, if possible.

5. Occupational safety and health management system documentation

5.1. According to the size and nature of activity of the *organization*, OHS management system documentation should be established and maintained, and may cover: (a) the OHS policy and objectives of the *organization*;

- (b) the allocated key OHS management roles and responsibilities for the implementation of the OHS management system;
- (c) the significant OHS hazards/risks arising from the *organization's* activities, and the arrangements for their prevention and control; and
- (d) arrangements, procedures, instructions or other internal documents used within the framework of the OHS management system.

5.2. The OHS management system documentation should be:

- (a) clearly written and presented in a way that is understood by those who have to use it; and

¹ OSH competence includes education, work experience and training, or a combination of these.

- (b) periodically reviewed, revised as necessary, communicated and readily accessible to all appropriate or affected members of the *organization*.

5.3. OHS records should be established, managed and maintained locally and according to the needs of the *organization*. They should be identifiable and traceable, and their retention times should be specified.

5.4. Workers should have the right to access records relevant to their working environment and health, while respecting the need for confidentiality.

5.5. OHS records may include:

- (a) records arising from the implementation of the OHS management system;
- (b) records of work-related injuries, ill health, diseases and incidents;
- (c) records arising from national laws or regulations dealing with OHS;
- (d) records of workers' exposures, surveillance of the working environment and workers' health; and
- (e) the results of both active and reactive monitoring.

6. Communication

Arrangements and procedures should be established and maintained for:

- (a) receiving, documenting and responding appropriately to internal and external communications related to OHS;
- (b) ensuring the internal communication of OHS information between relevant levels and functions of the *organization*; and
- (c) ensuring that the concerns, ideas and inputs of workers and their representatives on OHS matters are received, considered and responded to.

7. Initial review

The *organization's* existing OHS management system and relevant arrangements should be evaluated by an initial review, as appropriate. In the case where no OHS management system exists, or if the *organization* is newly established, the initial review should serve as a basis for establishing an OHS management system.

8. System planning, development and implementation

The purpose of planning should be to create an OHS management system that supports:

- (a) as the minimum, compliance with national laws and regulations;
- (b) the elements of the *organization's* OHS management system; and
- (c) continual improvement in OHS performance.

The OHS planning arrangements of the *organization* should cover the development and implementation of all the OHS management system elements.

9. Occupational safety and health objectives

Consistent with the OHS policy and based on the initial or subsequent reviews, measurable OHS objectives should be established. They need to be specific, realistic and achievable, consistent with national laws and regulations, documented, and communicated to all relevant functions and levels of the *organization*.

10. Hazard prevention

10.1. Hazards and risks to workers' safety and health should be identified and assessed on an ongoing basis.

10.2. Hazard prevention and control procedures or arrangements should be established.

10.3. Before the implementation of any change(s) the relevant bodies should ensure that all affected members of the *organization* are properly informed and trained.

10.4. Emergency prevention, preparedness and response arrangements should be established and maintained. These arrangements should identify the potential for accidents and emergency situations, and address the prevention of OHS risks associated with them. The arrangements should be made according to the size and nature of activity of the *organization*.

10.5 Procurement procedures should be established and maintained to ensure that:

- (a) compliance with safety and health requirements for the *organization* is identified, evaluated and incorporated into purchasing and leasing specifications;
- (b) national laws and regulations and the *organization's* own OHS requirements are identified prior to the procurement of goods and services; and

10.6. Contracting arrangements should be established and maintained for ensuring that the *organization's* safety and health requirements, or at least the equivalent, are applied to contractors and their workers.

11. Performance monitoring and measurement

Procedures to monitor, measure and record OHS performance on a regular basis should be developed, established and periodically reviewed. Responsibility, accountability and authority for monitoring at different levels in the management structure should be allocated.

12. Investigation of work-related injuries, ill health, diseases and incidents, and their impact on safety and health performance

12.1. The investigation of the origin and underlying causes of work-related injuries, ill health, diseases and incidents should identify any failures in the OHS management system and should be documented.

12.2. The results of investigations, in addition to any recommendations from the safety and health committee, should be communicated to appropriate persons for corrective action, included in the management review and considered for continual improvement activities.

13. Audit

Arrangements to conduct periodic audits are to be established in order to determine whether the OHS management system and its elements are in place, adequate, and effective in protecting the safety and health of workers and preventing incidents.

14. Management review

14.1. Management reviews should evaluate the overall strategy of the OHS management system to determine whether it meets planned performance objectives and needs of stakeholders, including its workers and the regulatory authorities;

14.2. The management review should consider the results of work-related injuries, ill health, diseases and incident investigations; performance monitoring and measurement; and audit activities; and

14.3. The findings of the management review should be recorded and formally communicated to:

- (a) the persons responsible for the relevant element(s) of the OHS management system so that they may take appropriate action; and
- (b) the safety and health committee, workers and their representatives.

15. Preventive and corrective action

15.1. Arrangements should be established and maintained for preventive and corrective action resulting from OHS management system performance monitoring and measurement, OHS management system audits and management reviews.

15.2. When the evaluation of the OHS management system or other sources show that preventive and protective measures for hazards and risks are inadequate or likely to become inadequate, the measures should be addressed according to the recognized hierarchy of prevention and control measures, and completed and documented, as appropriate and in a timely manner.

16. Continual improvement

16.1. Arrangements should be established and maintained for the continual improvement of the relevant elements of the OHS management system and the system as a whole.

16.2. The safety and health processes and performance of the *organization* should be compared with others in order to improve health and safety performance.